

**This newsletter was written and prepared before the Hamas' vicious attack on Israel on October 7th. Any hopes we had for the upcoming year are now colored by the current situation, the murder and kidnapping of so many Israeli civilians and soldiers, and the outbreak of war. It is our hope that Israel as a country, and we as an academic center, will be able to return to our daily routines soon, with a sustainable peace in which the contribution of the humanities to a better future plays an important role. In the meantime, we present this newsletter with hopes for a peaceful resolution and for the preservation of all life.**



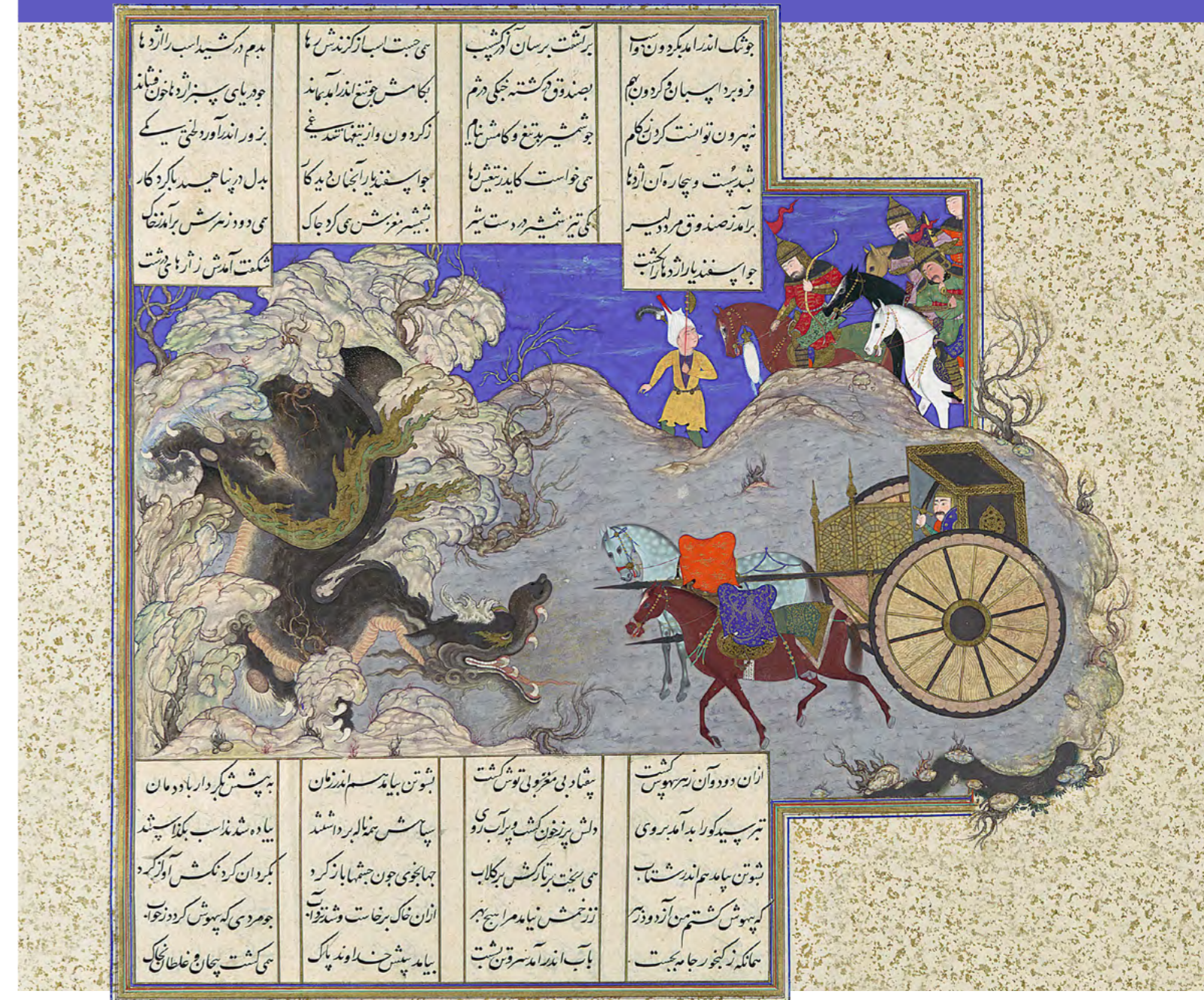
Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School  
for Advanced Studies in the Humanities

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM  
الجامعة العبرية في أورشليم القدس



מנדל סכוליון  
Mandel Scholion  
مندل سخوليون

# Year in Review, 2022-2023



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Editor:  
Moran Zini Gradshtein

Cover Photo: "Isfandiyar's Third Course: He Slays a Dragon", Folio 434v from the Shahnama (Abu'l Qasim Firdausi), Qasim ibn 'Ali, Iran, ca. 1530  
Photos Credits: Bruno Chabit, Yam Traiber  
Graphic Design: Yuval Hefetz

# From Our Academic Head



*Five hundred twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes  
How do you measure, measure a year?*

*In daylights, in sunsets  
In midnights, in cups of coffee  
In inches, in miles  
In laughter, in strife  
In five hundred twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes  
How do you measure a year in the life?*

(Jonathan D. Larson @ Universal Music Publishing Group)

These words, from the song “Seasons of Love” (RENT) occurred to me when thinking about summarizing this year, my fourth as director of Mandel Scholion. I thought of these lyrics not just because of the many cups of coffee people drink at our center very close to three hundred and sixty-five days a year, but also because the question of how we measure our time here at Mandel Scholion and how we measure our success, is one with which we have been particularly occupied as we celebrated the Center’s twentieth anniversary this past year.

This newsletter contains some of the highlights of the year and the measures that constitute the marking of time at Mandel Scholion: our twentieth anniversary celebration; the publications of the research group and of the individual fellows; the tenure track positions secured by the Mandel Fellows; fellowships won by our doctoral students and prizes won by our members; as well as the collective and individual opportunities for learning from each other as part of the Center’s trips, conferences and seminars.

Looking forward to the coming year, we hope to continue our rich program of seminars, trips, and conferences and are excited to welcome two new Mandel fellows, Dr. Hila Dayfani and Dr. Hanan Mazeh, and the new research group “Passivities”, composed of four senior scholars, four doctoral students, and a research assistant. We are looking forward to the ways that they will contribute to and enhance Mandel Scholion’s ongoing efforts to advance the humanities.

Running the Mandel Scholion Center is a labor of love, for me and the entire staff. It is with a profound sense of gratitude and appreciation that I extend my thanks to the staff at the Center for all their hard work: to the executive director Moran Zini Gradshtein and her assistant Ahalela Nikkals; to our beloved research assistants: Noa Goldberg and Mia Azruel, who are leaving us, and Nitsan Israeli, Einav Kotzer, and Hadar Tamir who are continuing; and to Dorin Nasi, our accountant, and Irina Dostov, the administrative director of the Mandel School. My sincere and most heartfelt thanks go to the Mandel Foundation, especially: Prof. Jehuda Reinharz, Moshe Vigdor, and Dr. Tamar Abramov, as well as the entire board. The Mandel Foundation’s unwavering belief in Mandel Scholion, and its steadfast support, year in and year out, is a central factor in our continued success.

The lyrics quoted above reflect the moments of joy and discovery that we at Mandel Scholion are fortunate to experience on an almost daily basis. This was even more pronounced this year, as outside our doors the political and social crises in Israel continued to rage, making us ever more cognizant and appreciative of the opportunity the Center provides each of us as individuals, and all of us, as a community of scholars, to pursue our work in an open environment, committed to the study of liberal arts. At the same time, Mandel Scholion was not a place to hide from current events. Many of us took our beliefs to the streets, outside the academy, each as he or she saw fit.

Together with our hope for better days in Israel, the past months have demonstrated the extent to which a strong humanist education and repertoire are needed to allow the culture of learning we all value to thrive and be accessible to all. I close this letter with wishes for not only a successful academic year, one in which we continue to learn from each other, but also with hopes for a year in which the humanities will flourish.

Elisheva Baumgarten

# Research Groups

## “Past and Past Perfect”

2020-2023

As we conclude our three years at the Mandel Scholion Center, we are pleased to present a summary of our joint intellectual journey on the topic of “Past and Past Perfect.” Our research group explored the complex interplay between past and present in the societies of the Near East and the Mediterranean during ancient and medieval times. Examining a number of different causes, contexts, and situations, we sought to uncover the dynamics of “memory of the past” in diverse historical, cultural, social, and political settings in these regions. Our central goal was to understand how pre-modern societies perceived their past, how this perception influenced

their present, and how their present shaped their understanding of the past.

Each year, the group’s activities revolved around a single theme: Stories of Genesis, in our first year, concentrated on the memories of the distant past relating to the origins of groups, dynasties, ruling institutions, and the foundation of cities, palaces, and sanctuaries. Continuity and Change in the second year, dealt with the sense (or illusion) of endurance and transformation despite – or perhaps as a result of – ethnic, religious, or political changes. In the third year we focused on Memory and Oblivion, discussing questions such as which personalities, events, and sites of the past (real or imagined) have



The Children of Jacob Sell  
their Brother Joseph  
(Genesis 37:11-35)  
Through the Eyes of  
Konstantin Flavitsky, 1855



Architectural element found at the Ophel Excavation 2023, Directed by Prof. Uzi Leibner and Dr. Orit Peleg-Barkat (Aubrey Mercado of Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology)

the investigated groups ‘remembered,’ which were ignored or forgotten, and which were intentionally consigned to oblivion.

One of the salient features of our research group was learning and exploring through tours and meeting people off campus. Site visits over the period of our work at the Mandel Scholion Center included: The City of David in Jerusalem, guided by one of our group members, Nili Wazana; L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, led by head guide Jenya Furman; the Israel Museum, where we visited the exhibition “How Long Is Now?,” which explores how artists see their past and use it in their art; The Ophel in Jerusalem (south of Temple Mount) guided by one of our group members, Uzi Leibner. We also had a tour of Abu Gosh where we visited the Benedictine Monastery, the house of `Isa Jabir, former mayor of Abu Ghosh, and the Ahmad Kadyrov Mosque. In July 2022, we also traveled overseas for a tour of Rome. ([See last year’s newsletter for descriptions of all these trips](#)).

The Mandel Scholion Center events that we conceptualized, organized, and led, were also in the spirit of learning and exploring through the eyes and feet: our tour of the Jezreel Valley in 2021;

our concluding conference, which included tours of the Israel Museum storerooms, the Valley of the Cross Monastery, and the Mount Scopus campus; and our farewell event, which included a tour of the renovated Tower of David Museum and the Armenian Museum.

The last project of the group will be the final publication, where all group members will present a summary of their personal research as it relates to the group’s research themes. The publication will be part of the Mandel Scholion Library series.

As we bid farewell, we extend our deepest appreciation to the Mandel Scholion Center for providing us with this remarkable opportunity for intellectual growth and exploration. The past three years have been transformative, fostering collaboration, expanding our horizons, and enriching our research endeavors. We depart with profound gratitude for the knowledge gained and the memories created during our time here.

**Group Members: Prof. Reuven Amitai, Prof. Uzi Leibner, Prof. Nili Wazana, Prof. Alexander Yakobson, Reut Achdut, Ronnie Agassi, Inbal Lev-Ari, Anita Reisler, Noa Goldberg.**

# “The Evolution of Attention in Modern and Contemporary Culture”

2021-2024

This year the group developed new lines of inquiry, furthered questions broached in our initial year of research, led the Mandel Scholion research center outing in December and initiated a number of research visits that greatly enriched the group’s scientific horizons.

Our visiting researchers included Prof. Yehuda Roth (HUJI) who discussed the medical and cultural aspects of the sense of smell; Prof. Roth is an otolaryngologist at Wolfson Medical Center and an artist. He is also a senior lecturer at Tel Aviv University and served as an associate professor at the University of Toronto. Prof. Roth shared with the group his experiments with art dedicated to the sense of smell and presented a few of his artworks and exhibitions he curated, which were dedicated to scent and its place in society. He also discussed the way we attend to experiences of smell in everyday life, the associations and attention aroused by different scents and the public attention brought to sensations of scent during the Covid-19 pandemic and its effect on people’s ability to smell and taste.

Yoel Gordon, a graduate student conducting research in Ayelet Landau’s laboratory presented the background and design of a study entitled *States*

*of Consciousness* that investigates neural correlates of altered states of consciousness. Yoel is working together with Ayelet on the design of a scientific way to examine the brain and sensory impact of drumming on consciousness. As a background to this study, Yoel presented his theoretical research on the universality of rhythm based on shamanic practices across the globe.

Dr. Adam Hahn (University of Bath) spoke about *Biases Left Unattended: Dissociating Attention from Conscious Awareness in Research on Implicit Evaluations*.

Dr. Hahn is a cognitive psychologist who specializes in the social-cognitive underpinnings of stereotyping and prejudice. Speaking about implicit measures and biases, he argued that, contrary to the accepted assumption that implicit intergroup bias measures reflect “unconscious attitudes,” our definition of the unconscious is critical to the evaluation and interpretation of data. Thus, data arising from his research indicates that implicit evaluations do not reflect unconscious cognitions per se, but rather cognitions that are often left unattended, and frequently miscalibrated.

Group members also presented new aspects of their ongoing research.

Yael Levin discussed author Anna Burns’s novel *No Bones* (2001) as a method to gauge the effects of trauma on attention and memory. At once a coming-of-age story and a depiction of the descent into madness, the novel’s protagonist grows up amidst the daily violence of the North Irish Troubles during the 1970s, as well as experiencing sexual abuse at home. Yael’s analysis shows how the novel’s style and themes mirror one another as the protagonist’s increasing detachment from reality is marked by the opening up of two time-lines and two settings, a breaking-down of a realistically chronological unfolding of events. Unlike Burn’s later novel, *Milkman*, where social pressures result in the policing of attention and a reading of attention as performance, in *No Bones* trauma upsets attention; it creates a surrealist, oneiric experience whose connection to reality is tenuous and disturbing.

At a joint seminar for members of “The Evolution of Attention” and “Past and Past Perfect” research groups, Sara Kopelman spoke about “*Visual Attention and Collective Memory*”. The seminar focused on the distinctions between collective

memory and ideological message, as conveyed in iconic photographs depicting victorious moments, particularly photographs of the raising of flags, and the power dynamics between the United States and the Soviet Union during the 20th century. The seminar also explored the disparities between these iconic images and other historical records documenting the same events. During the seminar, the importance of these differences was emphasized, along with a proposal to challenge the dominant narrative portrayed in iconic photographs. This involved critically examining the images by utilizing the unique potential of the medium of photography such as comparing the frozen photographs with the films from those events.

Gal Ventura’s talk “*Queuing for Fun: Distraction, Mass Culture, and Forced Leisure*” explored visual and textual representations of Parisians voluntarily queuing for entertainment gained popularity in nineteenth-century France. A queue is a simple method of ensuring order and efficiency, imperative in an overpopulated, industrialized, and thriving metropolis. Yet, Gal argued, rather than simply externalizing a gap between supply and demand, the very existence of “fun lines” became



Bill Genaust, Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima, 1945, Still from Video



Exhibition Photograph of “Sigalit Landau: The Burning Sea,” The Israel Museum,” 2023. Photographer: Nitsan Israeli.

a form of recreation, and lining up became an end to itself, with its own intrinsic rewards and satisfactions. As the anticipated goal in queueing images is, in fact, an imaginary event, the sense of spectacle and excitement derives entirely from the line’s structure, length, and human characteristics relating to age, gender, and social standing. By denoting status through the availability of free time and disposable income, queues for entertainment became autonomous symbols of consumption; the longer the wait, the better the end goal must be.

Tamar Kojman discussed the chapter “Imagined Pleasures: The Erotics and Aesthetics of

Consumption,” Rita Felski’s 1995 book, *The Gender of Modernity*, from the perspective of the cultural regulation of attention. She underlined the historically constructed link between consumption, frivolity, erratic stimuli, and lack of focus, the gendering of these connotations, and how they were distinguished from supposedly rational and respectable “high” culture and the attentional norms that come with it.

We had the privilege of leading the annual Mandel Scholion excursion (for a description of this trip [see p. 38](#)) and had a special group outing to visit Sigalit Landau’s *The Burning Sea* exhibit. A prominent Israeli artist whose sculptures, videos, and installations have earned her international recognition, Landau’s aesthetic is both highly local and widely universal, using regional landscapes to express tensions between the personal and political, national, and international, as well as between nature and the culture that annihilates it. Landau’s work is characterized by a feminine, circular, mythic perception of time, engaging recurring cycles of destruction and rebirth. As a result, throughout the tour of the exhibition, which was led by Gal Ventura, we found ourselves discussing timeless questions regarding identity, humanity, memory, and pain that the works evoked. A prime example is her work *DeadSee*, 2005, where Landau herself is part of a spiral of 500 watermelons floating and slowly unwinding in the Dead Sea. A few watermelons have been smashed open; the promise of their lush, juicy interiors contrasting starkly with the sense of helplessness the work exudes.

**Group Members: Prof. Ofer Ashkenazi, Prof. Ayelet Landau, Prof. Yael Levin, Prof. Gal Ventura, Tamar Kojman, Sara Kopelman, Aysheh Maslemani, Hadas Schlusel, Nitsan Israeli.**

# “Remapping Ancient Elites: Between East and West”

2022-2025

Our first year at the Mandel Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center can be described as a successful experiment in forging new collaborations between four senior scholars from different fields and four doctoral students who began their independent research. While our group is relatively homogeneous in terms of its focus on Late Antiquity from the perspective of different disciplines in the humanities, we invested a lot of thought in defining the kind of academic leadership, cooperation, and mutual support we wanted to develop. Special attention was paid to the delicate balance between the overall activities of the Mandel Scholion community and our particular group, the connections between the two being facilitated by our student coordinator, Mia Azrael.

The group had an excellent start: the different responsibilities were easily distributed, and their implementation went smoothly. Our decision to meet together for coffee before the seminar proved felicitous and improved both personal and academic exchange. Other notable occasions for bonding and exploring were the international workshop organized by Avner Ecker, entitled “Excuse me, are you a member of a local elite?” with a focus on methodological questions, and the preparations of an event at the Israel Museum, led by Shir Hoori.

The weekly group seminars were the backbone of our joint endeavors. We started the year with joint reading sessions, which created a common theoretical denominator. Avigail Manekin-Bamberger led three group seminars dedicated to critical reading and discussion of key studies connected to the subject of “remapping elites.”

In the following seminars Avner Ecker shared his work on Roman army veterans in Palaestina and their influence on the local populations. He challenged previous assumptions that veterans relocated outside the province due to hostility from the locals, and argued, on the basis of a systematic analysis of epigraphic, papyrological, and archaeological evidence, that they not only settled in the Roman colonies of Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina but also in other areas such as Sepphoris and Tiberias, which were Jewish hubs. The impact of the veterans on the local communities had far-reaching implications, observable in the material culture of Roman and Late Antique Palaestina.

The next speaker was Maren Niehoff, who shared her new research on the rabbis of Caesarea, a prominent elite during the third century CE who were ultimately superseded by the rabbinic leadership of Tiberias. As the editors of the rabbinic literature from Palaestina, it was this latter group that ultimately had the last word on preserving the memory of the Caesareans.



Aramaic Incantation Bowl Intended for Protection and Expelling Demons, Dated to the 5th-7th Century CE, The National Library of Israel Collections

Niehoff argued that the traditions attributed to the rabbis of Caesarea as a group reflect Tiberian perceptions and Tiberian aspirations for dominance rather than “original” Caesarean materials. Niehoff plans to pursue this line of research during the following two years at Mandel Scholion, hoping to reconstruct this ancient, Western-oriented, elite within the rabbinic movement that was subsequently marginalized by a new elite with a more Eastern orientation.

Avigail Manekin-Bamberger spoke about “Mystics, Magicians and the Question of Other Jewish Religious Elites in Late Antiquity”, sharing insights from her new research project on Jewish mystical literature in Late Antiquity and its relation to ancient Jewish magical materials. Contrary to most scholars, who tend to differentiate between the two fields, oftentimes connecting mysticism to more learned circles, and magic amulets to more popular ones, Manekin-Bamberger research suggests that they in fact shared many similar practices and formulae.

Yakir Paz shared insights into his work on the Jews of Khuzestan and those of Mede during the Sassanian period, two groups marginalized by the rabbinic elites during the composition of the Babylonian Talmud. His reconstruction of their original contours and economic power involves a subversive reading of the biased accounts in the Talmud and offers a more

nuanced historical picture.

Oz Tamir completed his Ph.D. proposal and began working on the first chapter of his dissertation, part of which he presented at the group seminar. Examining passages from the works of Jerome, an Early Church father from the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, he showed how they reflect a remarkable variety of concurrent Jewish interpretations and provide information on Jewish elites not known from other sources. Some passages echo Jewish Hellenistic exegesis on place names, not attested to elsewhere, while others take an historical approach to biblical prophecies, very different from the approach of the rabbis. Oz also pointed to some Jewish traditions preserved by Jerome, which shed new light on the work of the rabbinic compilers.

Alon Brand submitted his M.A. thesis and began his doctoral research on rabbinical literature in Italy during the Middle Ages. In the group seminar, he examined Italian Judaism between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, a transitional period often referred to as a “dark age.” Prior to this period, Italian Judaism was Greco-Roman in its orientation, while, by the early Middle Ages it abruptly reappears under the guise of a rather more conventional rabbinic Judaism. Brand scrutinized available sources and methodologies that can potentially shed light on this gap, including epigraphy, references found in Christian literature, remnants of Hebrew





**Group Member Dr. Avner Ecker leads his team exposing a Byzantine structure in the Tel Abu Shusha excavations**

manuscripts, redactional indications within the Midrash and Piyyut literature, and later Jewish-Italian writings. He is also currently writing an article together with Dr. Yakov Mayer, a post-doctoral fellow at Mandel Scholion, delving into a collective of Jewish writers active in Rome towards the end of the thirteenth century.

Shir Hoori is currently in advanced stages of writing her PhD research proposal. During this year she compiled a list of mosaics that are of particular interest and deepened her acquaintance with key studies in the field of ancient Roman and Byzantine mosaics. In her presentation in the group seminar, entitled: “The Mosaics of Syria in Late Antiquity: A Departure from Traditional Styles and a Shift in the Tastes of Patrons” Shir discussed some of the repetitive motifs of these mosaics and led a thought-provoking discussion regarding their possible socio-historical meanings.

Rachel Rosenbaum-Lederman is working on her PhD research proposal and other research projects related to medieval Jewish kabbalah. Throughout the year she focused on issues pertaining to the composition and canonization of the Zohar, through a philological and historical study of the “Sitrei

Torah” unit. Her seminar entitled: “A Glimpse into the Complex Formation of the Zoharic Corpus” will be given next semester.

In summary, the year has been a productive one. Some group members have begun to explore new areas of research, while others have started to work together more closely on their respective subjects, exchanging information, drafts of papers, and discussing shared questions. A special source of satisfaction has been the collaboration between text-oriented scholars and experts of material culture and artifacts. The group also collaborates closely with the National Forum for the Study of Late Antiquity, founded by Maren Niehoff at the Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities. In addition, two of our doctoral students have already presented their work at conferences outside the group. Moreover, our group has reached out and invited five doctoral students and several post-doctoral fellows from the greater Mandel Scholion community to join academic platforms outside Mandel Scholion in which the senior group members are involved.

**Group Members: Dr. Avner Ecker, Dr. Avigail Manekin-Bamberger, Prof. Maren Niehoff, Dr. Yakir Paz, Alon Brand, Shir Hoori, Rachel Rosenbaum Lederman, Oz Tamir, Mia Azrael.**

## Research Groups: Seminars

### “Past and Past Perfect” Seminars and Activities

- **Prof. Alexander Jakobson** | HUJI  
*The Ever-Changing Past of Russia and Ukraine*
- **Prof. Uzi Leibner** | HUJI  
*Tour of the Ophel Archeology Site in Jerusalem*
- **Stav Lavon** | HUJI  
*Seen and Unseen: The Presence of the Hidden Remains of St. Francis in his Burial Basilica*

- **Inbal Lev- Ari** | HUJI  
*Is Visual Memory the Same as Textual Memory in Ancient Greek Culture? The Case Study of the Date Palm Tree*
- **Prof. Galit Noga-Banai** | HUJI  
*Conflicts Surrounding the Rebuilding of the Bornplatzsynagoge in Hamburg*
- **Anita Reisler** | HUJI  
*Filling the Void: Forgetting and Constructing Memory in the Historiography Concerning the Rise to Power of Theodosius I*



- **Prof. Ofer Ashkenazi** | HUJI  
*“Wir Wunderkinder” and Germany in the 1950s*
- **Dr. Meir Ben-Shahar** | The Open University  
*Adapted Memories: The Destruction of the Second Temple in the Mishna and the Tosefta*
- **Prof. Reuven Amitai** | HUJI  
*“Resurrection: Ertuğrul” or: Uniting the Turks and Saving the Islamic World, Offering Good Entertainment at the Same Time*
- **Ronnie Agassi** | HUJI  
*Between Memory and Oblivion - The Decline of the Ottoman Empire*
- **Sara Kopelman** | HUJI  
*Attention and Collective Memory*
- **Dr. Micki Eisenman** | HUJI  
*Hang the DJ: How Technologies of the Past Facilitate Occupational Boundaries*

### “The Evolution of Attention” Seminars:

- **Prof. Yehuda Roth** | HUJI  
*The Meeting of Senses: Scent and Plastic Art*
- **Yoel Gordon** | HUJI  
*States of Consciousness*
- **Dr. Adam Hahn** | University of Bath  
*Biases Left Unattended: Dissociating Attention from Conscious Awareness in Research on Implicit Evaluations*
- **Prof. Gal Ventura** | HUJI  
*Tour of the exhibition: Sigalit Landau: The Burning Sea, The Israel Museum*
- **Sara Kopelman** | HUJI  
*Visual Attention and Collective Memory*



Photos: Mandel Scholion Staff

### “Remapping Ancient Elites” Seminars

- **Local Elites and Challenging the “Two-Tier” Social-Historical Model** | Group Discussion  
Following the reading of Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, and Daniëlle Sloopjes, “Local Elites and Power in the Roman World: Modern Theories and Models”
- **Lived Religion and Freelance Experts** | Group Discussion  
Following the reading of Heidi Wendt, *Religion at the Temple Gates*
- **Melania the Elder - Aristocracy, Asceticism, and Gender** | Group Discussion  
Chapters and primary text from Elizabeth A. Clark, *Melania the Younger: From Rome to Jerusalem*
- **Dr. Avner Ecker** | HUJI  
One Elite: Literary, Epigraphic, and Archaeological Evidence for Roman Veteran Settlement
- **Prof. Maren Niehoff** | HUJI  
The Rabbis of Caesarea in Genesis Rabbah and the Jerusalem Talmud
- **Dr. Avigail Manekin** | HUJI  
Mystics, Magicians, and the Question of “Other” Elites
- **Prof. Avishai Bar-Asher** | HUJI  
Sar Torah: Hekhalot Rabbati – from Magic and Liturgy to Literary Anthology
- **International Workshop: “Excuse me, are you a member of a local elite?”** | HUJI  
Remapping Local Elites in Late Antiquity: Jews, Christians, and Pagans
- **Dr. Yakir Paz** | HUJI  
“Elam is Dead”: The Jews of Khuzestan in the Sasanian Period
- **Oz Tamir** | HUJI  
Jerome Between the Rabbis, Jewish Hellenists, and Jewish Messianists
- **Prof. Theodore De Bruyn** | University of Ottawa  
Purists, Pragmatists, and Most People: A Comparative Analysis of Therapeutic Hierarchies in Alexander of Tralles, Barsanuphius, and John of Gaza
- **Alon Brand** | HUJI  
The Emergence of Italian Medieval Rabbinic Literature from Late-Antiquity Greco-Roman Jewry
- **Shir Hoori** | HUJI  
The Mosaics of Syria in Late Antiquity: A Departure from Traditional Styles and a Shift in the Tastes of Patrons

# Mandel Fellows

## Departing Fellows

**Dr. Céline Debourse**

2021-2023

During my second and final year at Mandel Scholion, I continued to work on my project, that explores aspects of cult and religion in Babylon in the second half of the first millennium BCE. In a forthcoming publication, co-authored with Uri Gabbay, I examine a series of cuneiform ritual texts with the emic title “Ancient Sumerian” and discuss its function and meaning in a Late Babylonian context. I also continued my work on the Late Babylonian priestly literature, finalizing the online database and presenting new results at international conferences (SBL, EABS, RAI).

A substantial part of my time was dedicated to my research on Mesopotamian rituals. Drawing from theories of ritual, as well as anthropology, sociology, and psychology, I studied specific rituals seeking to move away from philology and towards

interpretation. Part of the results will be published in a forthcoming paper “The *Akītu* Effect: How and Why the Mesopotamian Royal Ritual Works” (in E. Pfoh and J. Silverman, *The Routledge Handbook of the Ancient Near East and the Social Sciences*). I also developed an undergraduate class on Mesopotamian ritual, which explored ancient rituals in light of modern theories.

This fall (2023), I will be joining the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Harvard University as an assistant professor. While there, I will continue to teach and research the ancient Mesopotamian world. With my time at the Mandel Scholion Center coming to an end, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the people who have made my years in Jerusalem so meaningful. I am especially grateful to Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten and Ms. Moran Zini Gradshtein for their unwavering support.



BM 32544+ (c) Trustees of the British Museum – hand copy by C. Debourse.

Tablet 20 of the series called “Ancient Sumerian” (eme-gi<sub>7</sub> ul-du<sub>3</sub>-a). The first section contains part of a bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian text, describing how the god Marduk established the privileged status of the citizens of Babylon, which is subsequently confirmed by the king. To be published by Debourse & Gabbay, *forthcoming*.

## Dr. Sivan Goren-Arzon

2022-2023

Over the past year, I had the privilege of being a part of the Mandel Scholion Research Center. The second floor of the Mandel Building quickly became my academic home; a home full of inspiring conversation, academic and emotional support, and a haven for working in peace. Although excited to be leaving for a faculty position at Bar-Ilan University, I am sorry that my time at the center has come to an end. This has truly been an extraordinary year, one when interdisciplinarity became a reality rather than an unattainable ideal. Thank you to everyone at the Mandel Scholion Research Center, for making this year what it was.

My research focuses on Maṇipravāḷam literature, a corpus of poems in a language that blends together Sanskrit (India's cosmopolitan language) and Malayalam (the local language), composed in Kerala (southwestern India) during the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. The year began on a highly positive note, with the wonderful news that I had been awarded the Shlomo Pines Prize for Outstanding Researchers (2022). Over the course of the year I focused on three main projects: The first was my forthcoming book (based on my dissertation), *Sweet, Sweet Language: Tracing a Vernacular Literary Culture in Premodern Kerala*. Covering a selection of topics and texts in the history of Maṇipravāḷam literature, the book is intended to serve as a go-to source for readers interested in this understudied corpus, while also delving into questions regarding language, culture, and literary theory. The second project I worked on is a monograph I was commissioned to write on the *Līlātilakam*,

a fourteenth-century book on the grammar and poetics of Maṇipravāḷam. Apart from its importance for the study of the grammatical tradition in South Asia, this monograph reviews theoretical questions such as contacts between languages, word loaning, and the composition of poetry in the vernacular. Finally, I worked on my latest project, on women in early Maṇipravāḷam literature in connection to Kerala's matrilineal culture. For this project, I read a number of Maṇipravāḷam texts featuring local women as their heroines, a highly unusual topos in the context of Sanskrit and Sanskrit-style vernacular literature from premodern and early-modern South Asia.

I published several papers this year, and am in the process of writing several others. I also presented talks at a number of national and international conferences. The course I taught as a Mandel Fellow ("Love and Passion in Premodern India: From Theory to Literary Representation") allowed me to think through some of the topics that are relevant to my new project, such as gender, sexuality, and female agency and subjectivity. A particularly enjoyable talk I gave this year, entitled "Mutual Passion, Unrequited Love, and Paid Relationships in Premodern Literature from India," was organized by students from the Department of Asian Studies at the Hebrew University and took place at a bar in downtown Jerusalem. The enthusiastic discussion that followed made me realize how being a part of the community in arenas that go beyond the academy was both important and intellectually gratifying. As I head to new beginnings, I am grateful for everything this year has brought.



Painter:  
Raja Ravi Varma

## Dr. Michael Lukin

2020-2023

The Mandel Scholion experience is reminiscent of a beautiful rainbow that can sometimes be seen through the big window of the lobby where the fellows meet: revealing and changing the landscape. Just like the multi-colored rainbow, the discussions conducted in this very lobby, and the revisions suggested by my Mandel Scholion peers, of my articles and papers, illuminated my research questions and conclusions and showed them in a new light. I also had the privilege of teaching in three HUJI departments – musicology, folklore, and Yiddish studies – where I learned much from my students. The knowledge gained over the past three years resulted in nine conference talks and six articles published or submitted for publication. This would not have been possible without the Mandel Foundation’s financial support and the fellows’ intellectual generosity. Being part of Mandel Scholion changed the landscape of my research and enabled me to focus on my postdoctoral projects, all of which explore Yiddish music and folklore with a particular focus on the realm of semiotics and the history of scholarship.

I am currently editing a collection of some 200 Yiddish folk songs compiled in 1938 by the prominent but enigmatic Soviet scholar M. Beregovski, the only musicologist to systematically study Yiddish musical folklore in Jewish communities prior to the Holocaust. Beyond providing rare ethnomusicological transcriptions in the broad context of the extant documentation of Yiddish folk songs, this volume seeks to illuminate the history of research into secular Jewish music as part of

the European ethnomusicological discourse of the interwar period. Inter alia, it demonstrates that, although espousing Soviet mythologies, Beregovski was primarily interested in the traditional music of the Jewish petit bourgeois, stressing its idiosyncrasy and Western European roots. I am particularly interested in Beregovski’s dialogues—overt and covert—with non-Soviet scholars of Jewish music, European ethnomusicology, and Yiddish studies.

Setting out to refute the view that the early strata of this creation lies beyond the pale of research, I also proposed a new frame of reference for characterizing eastern Ashkenazi cantorial improvisation, Yiddish folk song, and Hasidic paraliturgical chants from the early-modern period through the post-Holocaust period. I demonstrated that gaps in information can be filled using an interdisciplinary approach, and in light of scholarship on co-territorial traditions. This methodology led me to discover, for example, that the popular narrative about the emergence of the Hasidic music out of surrounding soundscapes should be called into question and revised, with inter-ethnic musical dialogue appearing to have played only a minor role in its shaping. The musical innovation of eighteenth-century Hasidic song lay primarily in forms of performance rather than melodic contour, the latter being rooted in autochthonous Jewish traditions—instrumental (klezmer) music and cantorial singing. This research has laid the foundations for my next project, to be carried out in the framework of the 2023-2024 international fellowship program at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

I was able to execute these projects thanks to Professor Elisheva Baumgarten’s enduring support and thorough academic guidance which will be remembered and appreciated forever. I am also grateful to Professor Daniel Schwartz, former academic head of the Mandel School, for his consistent readiness to advise me on numerous topics, as well as to Mandel Scholion executive director Ms. Moran Zini Gradshtein and all her assistants for their efforts to make us feel at home. My multi-faceted encounter with Mandel Scholion will remain for me a symbol of bridging gaps and true scholarship.



“Singing while Cooking”,  
Molly Picon, “Mamele”,  
1938. (Youtube)

# Current Fellows

## Dr. Ofir Haim

During the initial months of the academic year, I collaborated with three colleagues from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (Andreas Kaplony) and Hamburg University (Ludwig Paul and Maximilian Kinzler) to finalize a forthcoming monograph. The monograph, *Hybrid Judeo-Persian and Arabic Correspondence: Eight Documents from the Cairo Genizah* (Vienna: The Austrian Academy of Sciences), deals with the commercial activities of bilingual Jewish merchants in the region spanning from the Persian Gulf to the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin. Additionally, I have given talks in Jerusalem and Yerevan (ASPS) about the literary heritage and religious history of Iranian Jewry, and authored two articles on these topics. The first article delves into the perspective of rabbinic literature and Rabbanites in Judeo-Persian Karaite exegesis. The second article focuses on the purported isolation of the Jews of Khorasan (present-day eastern Iran and northern and central Afghanistan) from the broader Jewish world.

I have also been working on some of the topics related to my current research project. I am currently preparing two articles dealing with questions related to the intricate tapestry of the pre-Mongol society of the Iranian world. The first article offers a preliminary geographic survey of the Bamiyan countryside (present-day central Afghanistan) and describes the dynamics between landowners and their tenants, based on the study of the archive of Yehuda ben Daniel (the “Afghan Genizah”). The second article

investigates the Islamization process of the eastern frontier of the Islamic world, particularly India. In a workshop held at Oxford University in December 2022, I presented on landownership and landholding patterns in early Ghaznavid Bamiyan, emphasizing the predominance of private land ownership in pre-Mongol Iran as reflected in the Yehuda ben Daniel archive. The talk is scheduled to be published as an article in an upcoming proceedings volume.



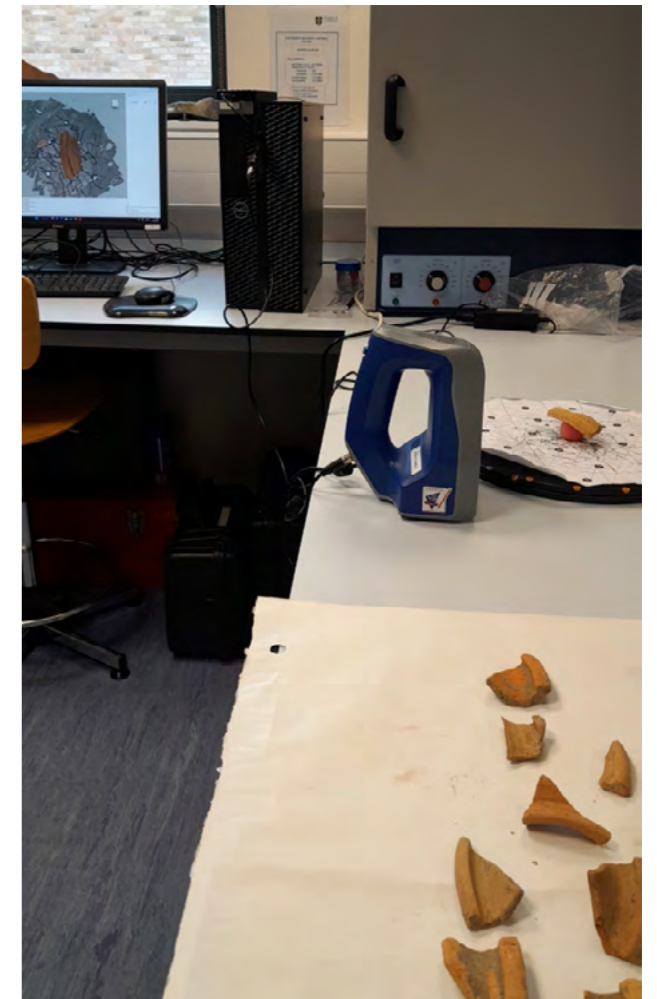
Photo: Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Ms. Heb. 8333.18=4r. A letter sent by a rural community to a landlord regarding the misconduct of his representative (central Afghanistan, eleventh century). Courtesy of the National Library of Israel.

## Dr. Ortal Harush

During my first year as a Mandel postdoctoral fellow in 2022/23, I focused on two main projects. The first is *Think Globally, Act Locally*, which examines the significance of regional differences in ceramic production centers under Roman imperial influence, from the perspective of “glocalization.” Glocalization, which refers to the two-way exchange of global concepts into local environments and the integration of local innovations into global contexts, captures the complex processes that blend global and local scales, intertwining similarities across different nations with variations between them. Historical evidence reveals instances of glocalization in which local communities encountered large-scale systems and adopted ideas from dominant cultures into their own lives. Despite its importance, only limited research currently exists on glocalization in ancient civilizations. The objective of *Think Globally, Act Locally* is to understand the mechanisms behind the diffusion of ideas and their impact on local production by focusing on two case studies: the Binyanei Ha’Uma site in Jerusalem, Israel and the Greenhouse farm site in Cambridgeshire, England. Although these sites share similarities, they likely served distinct roles. The Binyanei Ha’Uma site functioned as a longstanding manufacturing center, while the Greenhouse farm site had a seasonal production role. Nevertheless, both sites provide insights into how local production embraced or rejected imperial concepts.

The second project I worked on is the *Minute Variation Approach* in ceramic typology. Engaging in micro-typological ceramic research and recognizing its significance in the archaeological record inspired me to develop a new approach that aims to establish

a standardized method for comparative ceramic projects that focus on investigating morphometric variability in archaeological contexts. I am currently in the process of writing about this subject from a theoretical perspective.



From the “Think Globally, Act Locally” project: 3D scanning of ceramic shards from Greenhouse farm site, Cambridge University, January 2023. Photo: Dr. Ortal Harush

Dr. Yakov Z. Mayer

My first year as a postdoctoral fellow at the Mandel Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center was very fruitful. It enabled me to immerse myself in my main field of expertise – Hebrew book cultures. I was able to build the first building blocks for my current research project that deals with manuscripts, early printings, and the politics of knowledge production in the early modern era. I gained a lot from the combination of studying and teaching in the Department of Talmud at the Hebrew University. One particularly remarkable opportunity was studying and teaching one extraordinary manuscript of Talmud from the collection at the Oxford University Library (Bodleian Library MS. Oppenheim 726). Collaborating with my students, we debated the factors that led to this manuscript's unique combination of tractates and commentaries. The insights gained from this study have allowed me to forge new connections between book production and pedagogical aims.

In addition to my scholarly pursuits, I found great fulfillment in actively engaging with the academic community – being part of a university department, presenting at conferences, and facilitating workshops. However, what truly made this year unforgettable was the close-knit circle of postdoctoral fellows who enveloped me in their warmth and support. Their friendship and genuine care and understanding, proved invaluable as I navigated the challenges and triumphs of this year. We embarked on a shared quest to refine our public presentations and job talks, learning from each other's experiences and expertise. In short, this year has reinforced my understanding of the power of teamwork and the immeasurable value of collective knowledge. I eagerly look forward to the forthcoming years as a postdoc at the Mandel Scholion Research Center, where I hope to continue contributing to the vibrant scholarly community.



A page from MS Bodleian Library Oppenheim 726. Photo: Dr. Yakov Z. Mayer

# Research and Public Activities

## Monthly Pan-Scholion Seminars



**3 November, 2022**

**“The Evolution of Attention” seminar in preparation for the annual Mandel Scholion trip**



**15 December, 2022**

**“Remapping Elites in Late Antiquity” seminar**



**12 January, 2023**

**Dr. Ortal Harush (Mandel Fellow)**

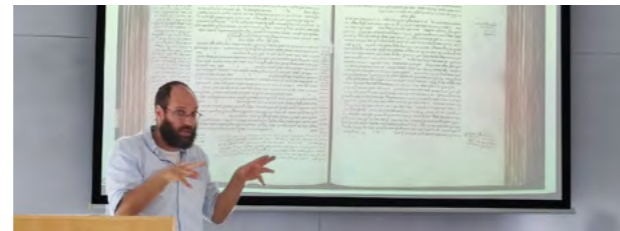
**Learning Networks: Social Signatures in Material Culture**



**27 April, 2023**

**Dr. Sivan Goren- Arzony (Mandel Fellow)**

**Female Voices from a Matrilineal World: Kerala’s Gems and Coral Literature**



**23 May, 2023**

**Dr. Yakov Meir (Mandel Fellow)**

**The Hebrew Printing Press in Venice: Theory, Practice and Polemics**

**22 June, 2023**

**“Past and Past Perfect” Concluding Seminar**

See in **Research Tours** (Page 40)

## Conferences and Events

**22 September, 2022**

**Rosh Hashana Toast**

The first gathering of the year was dedicated to bidding farewell to the “Setting Tables” Research Group (2019-2022) and to Dr. Hader Feldman Samet, who joined the faculty at Tel Aviv University.



Photos: Mandel Scholion Staff

**17 November, 2022**

**Celebration of Mandel Scholion’s Twentieth Anniversary and the Mandel School’s Tenth Anniversary**

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated both Mandel Scholion’s twentieth anniversary and the Mandel School’s tenth anniversary. At the event, attended by the Mandel Foundation Board and the Parkwood Corporation Board, we presented a range of the Mandel School’s activities, featuring presentations by postdocs and graduate students as well as a musical performance by an ensemble made up of members of the School and directed by Dr. Michael Lukin, a Mandel Fellow at the Mandel Scholion Center. We were joined throughout the morning by Prof. Asher Cohen, President of HUJI, and professors Israel Yuval and Daniel Schwartz, the previous heads of the Mandel School. At the end of the visit, each board member received a souvenir from the university and Prof. Cohen presented Prof. Reinhartz, President of the Mandel Foundation, with the “University Bible.”







Although the Board left after lunch, the festivities continued in the afternoon and throughout the evening, attended by graduates and current members of the Mandel Scholion Center and other school programs. Alumni flooded the building and in the presence of a full house, we heard faculty and founders talk about the Mandel School and the changes within it since its inception. We also held a thought-provoking panel on multi-disciplinarity. (To see the complete program click [here](#).) It was a wonderful event celebrating the Mandel School and the humanities.



Photos: Nahariel Neri Leader

**14-16 March, 2023**

**“Past and Past Perfect”**

**Final Conference: “Stories of Genesis, Continuation and Change, Memory and Oblivion”**

In March 2023, the “**Past and Past Perfect**” Research Group held their final conference, a three-day event that took place in the Mandel Building on the Mt. Scopus Campus, the Israel Museum, and the Israel Institute of Advanced Studies.

The conference summarized the work of the group over the past three years, which dealt with how past societies viewed, constructed, and reconstructed their own history. Accordingly, the themes of the sessions were devoted to the questions at the center of each year’s discourse: Stories of Genesis, Continuation and Change, and Memory and Oblivion. The different lectures heard over the course of the conference highlighted the interdisciplinarity of the group, whose members’ research fields include history, biblical studies, art history, and archaeology.

To start off the conference, which featured talks from group members and guest lecturers, Yonatan Goshen-Gottstein from the Psychology department at Tel Aviv University delivered an opening lecture on what a memory researcher “thinks you [scholars from the humanities] should know.” Goshen-Gottstein offered insights from the field of psychology and cognitive science on collective historical memory and the phenomenon of consigning historical and personal events to oblivion. His talk illustrated how even a basic familiarity with cognitive science can be helpful and inspiring for scholars in the humanities working



in different disciplines, cultural areas, and periods.

During the second day of the conference, which took place at the Israel Museum and the Israel Institute of Advanced Studies, a session was held on the national and universal past in the Bible. Group member Reut Ahdut showed how the processing and editing of Jacob’s traditions and the cycle of Joseph’s stories in the Book of Genesis shaped the character of

Judah as the firstborn. The next lecture, by Hebrew University biblical scholar Michael Segal, focused on fundamental conceptions of time and history in the rich collection of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature written from the 3rd century BCE to the first century, and in particular on the subgenre of texts commonly known as “historical apocalypses.” The second session of the day explored the Anatolian past, and featured lectures by two group members: Reuven Amitai focused on memory in 13<sup>th</sup> century Anatolia, and how the Turkish nomads (Turkmen) and sedentary population there looked at the earlier history of the Turks. He then went on to show how this period is perceived in Turkey today. Ronnie Agassi Cohen spoke about Persian epic poems in the service of Ottoman historiography of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, demonstrating how the Ottomans adopted and adapted models of Persian epic poetry to establish a connection between the Ottoman sultans and the kings and heroes of the Iranian past.

The final day of the conference was held at the Mandel Building. The first session featured group members Nili Wazana and Alexander Jakobson, who explored the issue of centers of power and memory. Wazana’s talk dealt with the Pentateuch’s rejection of traditions regarding the establishment of the sanctity of Jerusalem as the capital of Judah and its most important religious center. Jakobson discussed the attitude of Roman Emperors towards their predecessors, examining a number of cases in which Roman Emperors showed a “lack of solidarity” with their predecessors, and analyzed the different factors, personal and political, that influenced their policy in this respect. The following

session on memory construction in Classical Greek literature and ecclesiastical history began with a talk by guest participant Margalit Finkelberg from Tel Aviv University. She spoke about memory, oblivion, and the artificial past in the epic tradition of Ancient Greece, with an emphasis on the legacy of Homer. Group member Anita Reisler then gave a lecture on memory construction in the historiography concerning the rise to power of the Roman emperor Theodosius I, showing how both the primary sources contemporary with the accession and later ecclesiastical history avoided portraying Theodosius as a usurper.

The final session of the conference consisted of talks given by two group members whose research deals with visual and material culture and focused on stories of Genesis in the body and landscape. Uzi Leibner explored the ways in which the people of Roman Palestine connected the biblical past to their contemporaneous surroundings and showed

how their collective “memories” were embedded in the landscape, sites, or monuments around them, in order to give them concreteness. Inbal Ben-Ari’s lecture, “Between Artemis and Apollo: A New Interpretation of the Date Palm Tree Motif in Greek Art” demonstrated how, over the centuries, the powerful Olympic goddess Artemis gradually lost her power and prominence to her brother Apollo.

The lectures generated many fruitful discussions and provided insights for future research, and were accompanied by a number of tours, reflecting the group’s inclusion of field trips to various locations over the years. One tour was of the exhibitions and storerooms of the Israel Museum, followed by a talk on curating archaeological exhibitions, given by Dudi Mevorach, chief curator of the museum’s Roman, Hellenistic and Byzantine exhibits. The conference also featured a trip to the Valley of the Cross with veteran tour guide Gadi Wexler, who presented the history of the Valley and the first Jerusalemite light railway, followed by a tour of the Monastery of the Cross. Finally, and fittingly, Assaf Seltzer from the University of Haifa provided a tour of the historical campus of Mount Scopus, and shared his extensive knowledge of the ideological and physical foundation of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Photos: Yam Traiber

15 March, 2023

### “Remapping Elites in Late Antiquity: Jews, Christians, and Pagans”

Opening Workshop: “Excuse me, are you a member of a local elite?”

The world of Late Antiquity offered new possibilities for individual advancement within the ever-growing intricacies of bureaucratic, legal, religious, scholarly, and military networks. Men and women who used spiritual, financial, political, and sometimes military means to rise to positions of leadership replaced the traditional elites of the Roman Empire, namely senators, equestrians, and local members of town councils. Accordingly, “elites,” roughly defined as leading members of any type of social group, existed in a wider range and in smaller circles. Our Mandel Scholion group seeks to re-map and redefine these diverse elites during Late Antiquity in Palaestina and Babylonia.

After acquainting ourselves with the work of each of our group members during our first semester together, we advanced our project with an international workshop examining the very definition of the term “elites” in its Late Antiquities contexts. We invited nine speakers

from Israel and abroad for a one-day workshop, and asked them:

- How does one define an “elite”? How far can the term be stretched?
- What makes an “elite” “local”? How can well-known sources be used to uncover hitherto unnoticed elites?
- What differentiates the “elites” of Late Antiquity from preceding periods?

The result was a fascinating tour through the various definitions of “elites” and the historical circumstances that create and change the demographic makeup of this group over time. Our first speaker, Misha Meier (University of Tübingen), set the stage by speaking about military, quasi-national, and economic migrations in the Late Antique West and offered a *longue durée* approach to this phenomenon, as well as framing the European half of the Late Roman Empire as a place in turmoil, beginning as early as the third century CE. Yizhak Hen (HUJI), who responded, then connected Meier’s historical overview to the question of local elites and highlighted the difficulty of maintaining a steady single elite among shifting rulers.



Photo: Mandel Scholion Staff



# Research Initiatives

This was followed by lectures that focused on different types of elites. Benedikt Eckhardt (University of Edinburgh) discussed the importance of professional associations in Roman cities and raised the question of their members' status in society. In some associations, the high number of members alone seems to preclude them from being considered elites. Merva Haklai (BGU) responded and underlined the economic role of these associations and asked whether they had significant political power in cities. Lieve Vanhoof (University of Gent) reviewed the social and economic status of rhetors, lawyers, and notaries in the works of Libanius, who clearly graded each of the groups. Simcha Gross (University of Pennsylvania) highlighted the role of bishops in the frontier cities between the Roman and Sassanid empires as mediators in contested peripheries, showing the important role played by these seemingly local elites in international politics. Ed Watts (University of San Diego) spoke about the role of bankers in the Roman and Later Roman Empire, describing them as generators of credit and facilitators of large transactions, even on an Imperial level, thus highlighting yet another economic elite, albeit not necessarily a "local" one. Heidi Wendt (McGill University) returned to Early Christianity and described the profile of local literary elites in the Roman East.

Tobias Nicklas (University of Regensburg) summed up the day with concluding remarks and presented no less than nine big questions for further study, all of which emphasized the need to focus on concrete realities such as gender, age, and language within these groups. The workshop proved to be inspiring and fruitful for all concerned, especially for group members who

are now poised to delve deeper into this fascinating subject and gain a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play within elite circles.

**24 May, 2023**

### Buber and Mandel Fellows Meeting

We resumed a tradition that had been curtailed by the pandemic, namely of holding meetings between the Mandel Scholion postdoctoral fellows and the Buber Society of Fellows. In the fall, we all met at the Van Leer Institute with the Polonsky postdoctoral fellows and got to know each other. In May, we held a shared luncheon at which we heard brief talks given by Dr. Benjamin Wilck (Buber Society of Fellows) who spoke about "How to use a Definition in Scientific Proof: Euclid's Model" and Dr. Sivan Goren-Arzon (Mandel Fellow) who gave a short talk "On Aesthetic Diets and Multilingual Phonology: Lessons from Maṇipravālam Poetry." The talks were followed by a shared lunch and lively conversation.



### Dr. Michael Lukin: Nigunim Bim Bom

Hasidic music is at the center of Lukin's Mandel Scholion research initiative, encouraging a collaboration between scholars, the general public, and ultraorthodox experts with the goal of classifying the old Hasidic nigunim (mainly wordless mystical chants). Hundreds of nigunim form the core of the new trilingual database he created (<https://NigunimBimBom.org>), inviting users to search for tunes and provide verbal and musical details about those they recognize. Working in conjunction with scholars of non-Jewish traditional music, the hope to increase awareness of eastern-Ashkenazi repertoires within the broader European context.

**1 June, 2023**

### Dr. Ortal Harush and Prof. Gal Ventura

The Annual Conference for Research Students in the Arts was held at the Mandel Center at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on June 1st, 2023. This

conference was a collaboration between the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Shenkar College, and Hebrew University. The event featured lectures and talks from nearly twenty M.A. students from universities and art colleges across the country. In addition, a group of approximately 35 guests – students and professors – led by Dr. Ortal Harush, visited the Computational Archaeology Laboratory on campus where they met with Prof. Leore Grosman, the head of the laboratory, who discussed computer simulations, 3D technologies, and mathematical and computational methods developed to assist in archaeological research. Dr. Harush's project, which includes internship positions for a group of Bezalel students from the ceramics and glass design department, generated significant interest among participants, especially the visual studies and design researchers from Shenkar and Bezalel who were not familiar with the laboratory. We believe that opening up and introducing our endeavors to individuals from a variety of fields, enriches academic discourse and enables potential developments and opportunities that may arise from such interactions. The conference promoted this goal, and we are confident it will lead to new research ventures in the near future.



Photo: Omer Groswasser

20 June, 2023

**Dr. Ofir Haim, spearheaded the organization of the Eighth Irano-Judaica Conference.**

I had the privilege of organizing a one-day exhibition at the National Library of Israel on 20 June, 2023. This exhibition was a key part of the Eighth Irano-Judaica Conference, dedicated to the memory of Professor Shaul Shaked, which took place from June 18 to June 21, 2023. I co-organized the conference alongside Dr. Julia Rubanovich from the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During the exhibition, we had the honor of hosting lectures by Dr. Samuel Thrope, the curator of Islamic and Middle East collections at the National Library of Israel, and Prof. Dr. Shervin Farridnejad from Hamburg University.

and 2016. These texts form the basis of my ongoing research project on the medieval Jews of Afghanistan and their place within the broader Islamicate society. Therefore, I chose to present some texts that illustrate my research findings during my time as a Mandel postdoctoral fellow. Additionally, the exhibition included select items from the archives of the late Professors Shaul Shaked and Amnon Netzer, both renowned scholars of Iranian Jewry and organizers of the Irano-Judaica conferences. These items, exhibited for the first time, displayed the substantial contributions made by these scholars in advancing the study of Iranian Jewry, as well as the history of Judeo-Persian language and literature.

It was a truly fulfilling experience to be part of this exhibition and contribute to the exploration and dissemination of the rich culture of Persian-speaking Jews.

The exhibition focused on the extensive and diverse literary heritage of Persian-speaking Jews, using the National Library of Israel's rich collection of Judeo-Persian manuscripts. It covered the period from the emergence of Judeo-Persian literature in the tenth century to its demise in the mid-twentieth century. A significant portion of the exhibition was dedicated to the "Afghan Genizah," a unique collection of texts acquired by the National Library of Israel between 2013

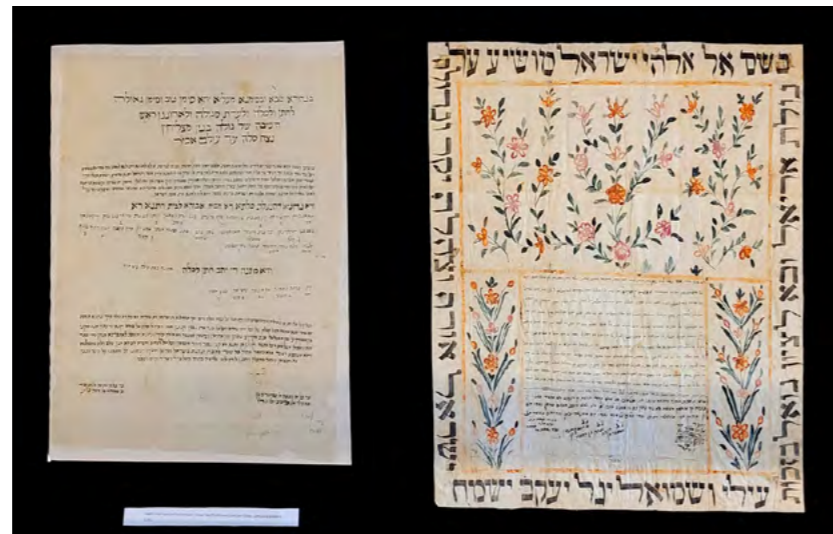


Photo: Ofir Haim

6-8 September, 2023

**Dr. Roni Mikel-Arieli (Alumna of the "In Someone Else's Shoes" Research Group): Commemorating the Eighty-Third Anniversary of the Jewish Deportation to the Island of Mauritius.**

In December 1940, 1,581 Jewish men, women and children who fled Nazi-controlled Europe to British Mandate Palestine, were eventually deported to the British colony of Mauritius. The detainees spent four years and seven months in Beau Bassin central prison before leaving the island in August 1945. This fall (September 6-8, 2023), thirty-eight ex-detainees and families (among them four ex detainees who were born on the island), diplomats from Germany, Austria, Britain, and Israel, the Vice President of Mauritius, religious leaders and distinguished guests from

Mauritius and around the world, gathered in Mauritius to commemorate the eighty-third anniversary of the Jewish deportation to the Island. The three-days event included a moving opening ceremony at the St. Martins' Jewish Cemetery where one hundred and twenty-six Jewish detainees are buried, a visit to the Beau Bassin prison, to the Rose Hill Concert Hall where the detainees performed and to the Port Louis Harbour. It concluded with a meeting with the President of Mauritius and a closing ceremony at LAMICALE MAURICE ISRAEL Centre. The event was organized by Dr. Roni Mikel-Arieli, the academic director of the Oral History Division at the Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tali Nates the founder and director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, and Owen Griffiths the President of the Beau Bassin Jewish Detainees Memorial & Information Centre and with the support of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Southern Africa.



Photo: Roni Mikel-Arieli

# Research Tours

## 1-2 December, 2022

The 2022 Mandel Scholion excursion was organized by “The Evolution of Attention” Research Group whose eight research members were so devoted that they donned t-shirts celebrating their love of the theme (see pictures below).

The tour began just outside of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art where the group congregated to hear some introductory words on the objectives of the excursion, which was to introduce our Mandel Scholion peers to new modes of thinking and experiencing attention.

The visit started with a presentation by Dr. Noam Gal, curator of *The Last Photograph: Ran Tal After Micha Bar-Am*, a first-of-its-kind exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Built around a documentary film based on the personal archive of Micha Bar-Am, the father of Israeli photojournalism, the exhibit disassembles and re-edits the archive into a multi-channel video installation in which viewers can move around freely. Following this exhibition, Gal Ventura and Nitsan Israeli led a tour through the exhibit

“Material Imagination,” a newly launched permanent display within the Israeli art collection. Departing from the story of Israeli art as a chronological, national narrative, this unique exhibition constitutes a dialogue between the four elements (earth, water, fire and ice) and ancient archetypes accumulated and etched in human consciousness, as expressed by a range of Israeli artists, both canonical and non-canonical.

Our next stop was Dizengoff Center, the first shopping and entertainment center in Tel Aviv. The group started the tour with a photography exercise in which individuals were given a prompt and asked to take pictures that responded to it in some way. The pictures were collected and presented at a group activity after dinner. Organized by Sarah Kopelman and Ofer Ashkenazi, the group discussed ways of paying attention to different elements in the urban space through various visual strategies in photography. Points of similarity were teased out between the photographs taken by participants and those taken by professional street photographers from

the 20th and 21st centuries. These commonalities were examined for the purpose of informing the participants of different photographic methods of creating attention.

In recent years Dizengoff Center has become a leading example of urban corporate sustainability. Led by the Dizengoff Center company tour guides, Mandel Scholion members investigated the different floors of the building: from the underground parking, where the mall’s trash is turned into compost, to the roof on which the company uses hydroponic and aquaponic methods to grow vegetables and flowers in the middle of the city. During the tour, we were reminded to pay attention to the world, the environment, and society and learned that every mundane action can make a difference locally and globally. We also proudly told the Dizengoff Center guides about our own compost project at Mandel Scholion.

The next leg of the trip brought us to “Dialogue in the Dark” at the Holon Museum for Children. The tour was framed by an exercise led by Hadas Schlusel. Participants were paired up and asked to gaze into one another’s eyes for 60 seconds. The task proved more challenging than anticipated. It revealed how social conventions control even intuitive actions, such as looking, and dictate where our attentions are comfortably channeled and where they are not. The experience was then repeated with a prompt: a direction for their thoughts. It is only then that participants were

comfortable with the exercise. This was followed by an hour-long, pitch-black tour of the museum. A blind tour guide took the participants through a number of rooms, each representing different spaces one encounters in one’s daily existence (a busy street, a home, a market, etc.). Since the participants couldn’t see anything, they had to rely on all their other senses to make sense of their environments. The guides facilitated our interaction with the environment and unpacked the link between perception and attention and how it is mediated by our cognitive resources. The tour was followed by Aysheh Maslemani’s talk about the two types of processing that occur in the dark: the automatic, fast system which is conducted automatically and the second controlled, slow system that is capacity-limited and requires attention. Aysheh also pointed out how automatic processes and the interactions between them lie at the root of cognitive biases. They manipulate our responses to our phenomenological and social environment and control the ways we understand and interact with the



Photos: Mandel Scholion Staff



Photos: Mandel Scholion Staff

things we encounter. The discussion concluded by giving tips to overcome such biases.

The second day started with a hike with a twist. Led by Ayelet Landau, participants were asked to engage in an attention exercise. Individuals in the team were instructed to walk in single file and in silence and to be attuned to their sensations and thoughts as they did so. The exercise had a notable impact on everyone. It directed everyone's attention to different inputs from the environment. Following the walk, we unpacked the experience together and saw that individual temperaments were often key to the way people responded to the experience.

The hike's destination was the Trappist monastery at Latrun, where we met with Fr. Christian, a monk who spoke to the participants about the order's way of life. Fr. Christian explained the function of silence, prayer, and manual labor in facilitating continuous attention to God and avoiding distractions as much as possible. The conversation was followed by Tamar Kogman's talk about the dual role of music

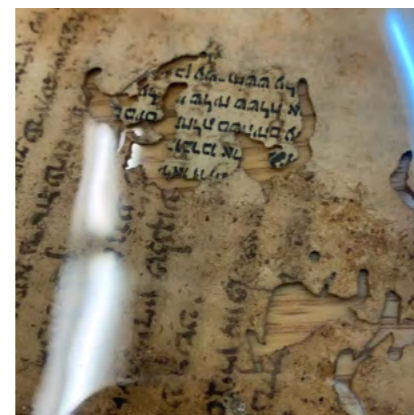
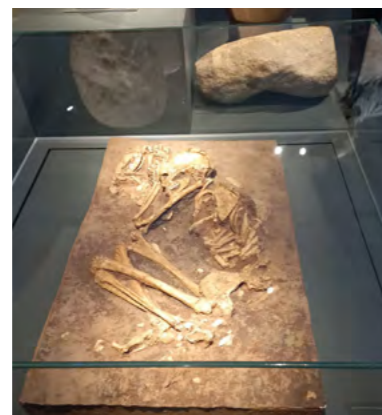
in Christianity and European culture as both a distracting and an elevating medium. After listening to some examples, the group heard the monks' noon prayer in the monastery church.

The tour ended with lunch, and everyone was invited to think over the various elements of the two days of experiences in the comfort of their own homes over the weekend.

**14 May, 2023**

### **Mandel Fellows in Jerusalem**

Continuing a tradition we began last year, all the post-doctoral fellows, together with Elisheva Baumgarten and Moran Zini Gradshtein dedicated a full day to learning about each other's research. We began our day at the National Library of Israel where we were hosted by Dr. Chaim Neriya, curator of Judaica. As part of our visit, Dr. Yakov Mayer presented book covers from the library's Judaica collection made from Hebrew manuscripts containing fragments of



Photos: Mandel Scholion Staff

the Talmud. We then visited the Israel Antiquities Authority's pre-historic storerooms and gallery, led by Ahiad Ovadia. We look forward to continuing this tradition on an annual basis!

**22 June, 2023**

### **End of the Year Tour, Led by the "Past and Past Perfect" Research Group**

Desirous of capturing the spirit and ideas that had guided the "Past and Past Perfect" Research Group throughout their time at Mandel Scholion, the departing members orchestrated a special event that went beyond the confines of a typical seminar. The seminar took place over the course of a full day, and included guided tours outside the university as well as opportunities for gathering and discussions, all aimed at fostering academic dialogue in a unique and dynamic setting.

The tour began with a visit to the newly re-opened Tower of David Museum. Participants were able to interact with historical artifacts, gaining a deeper understanding of the history of Jerusalem and the history and rebuilding of the museum itself. After the visit to the museum, time was allotted for gatherings and discussions. Reut Achdut, a doctoral member of the group, delivered a presentation in which she connected her research into biblical texts with the group's three successive thematic foci. Prof. Uzi Leibner and Noa Goldberg, the group's research assistant, shared the group's visions and plans alongside a summary of their activities over the past three years. Additionally, departing postdoctoral



Photos: Mandel Scholion Staff

researchers, Dr. Céline Debourse, Dr. Michael Lukin, and Dr. Sivan Goren-Arzonny, shared their impressions and experiences from their time at Mandel Scholion.

Finally, Yoav Loeff guided participants through the Armenian quarter, including the Armenian Museum and the Cathedral of St. James, where the members of Mandel Scholion learned about the rich history and vibrant culture of the Armenian community in Jerusalem. This visit provided a deeper understanding of the Armenian heritage and its local significance. Visiting the Tower of David and the Armenian Quarter introduced the group's interest to the Mandel Scholion Center scholars and shed light on the ways the history of communities is formed and viewed.

# Research Films

In honor of Mandel Scholion's twentieth anniversary, we prepared short films describing the experience of the fellows and their research. Please visit our website to learn more about our fellows and the exciting work they do.



The films we prepared this year include a brief overview of Mandel Scholion since its establishment twenty years ago as well as individual short clips (60-120 seconds) about specific research projects. This is a list of the films currently available on our website.



**Mandel Scholion Center:**  
Celebrating Twenty Years of Research



**Prof. Ofer Ashkenazi**  
"Evolution of Attention" Research Group:  
**Lives: Jewish Photography in Nazi Germany**



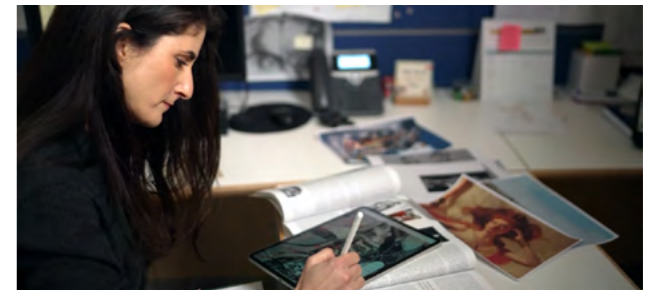
**Dr. Nadia Beider**  
"Setting Tables" Research Group:  
**Religious Switching in Contemporary Culture**



**Dr. Céline Debourse**  
Mandel Fellow, 2023-2021:  
**From Center to Periphery: Late Babylonian Institutional Religion**



**Inbal Lev-Ari**  
"Past and Past Perfect" Research Group:  
**Artemis's Journey: From the Fields to the Polis**



**Prof. Zeev Weiss**  
"Setting Tables" Research Group:  
**Daily Life in Roman Sepphoris: Interaction between Artifacts and Texts**



**Prof. Gal Ventura**  
"Evolution of Attention" Research Group:  
**Hush Little Baby: The Medicalization of Children's Sleep in Modern France**



Producer: Moran Zini Gradshstein Production, Director, D.O.P, Screenwriter, Editor: Shachar Naim and Noy Levin

# Mandel Scholion 2023-2024

## Our New Research Group

### “Passivities: Modes of Feeling, Modes of Knowing”

2023-2026

The opposition between action and passion pervades Western thought and organizes the theoretical models dictating how we perceive our immediate environment, process empirical data, and make sense of the world around us. The action/passion dichotomy is coded in metaphors that contrast the mind as a mirror, passively reflecting external reality, to the mind as a searching lamp, projecting its own light on its surroundings. It is embedded in the philosophical polemic between a materialist notion of human existence, understood as a passive reaction to external stimuli, and an idealist celebration of human agency and creativity in organizing and interpreting experience.

The research group on Passivities will interrogate the historical forces and philosophical traditions that have taught us to privilege action and activity over passion and passivity in cognitive, moral, and aesthetic processes. Approaching the concept of passivity in a comparative and multidisciplinary way, the team will trace the history of the concept and its revalorization in modern scientific thought, literary history, and aesthetics, from the emergence of Humanism, when Renaissance writers grappled with Stoic and Scholastic theories of emotion, through the epistemological upheavals of the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment, as scientists and artists sought to reimagine the role of passive faculties and passive attitudes (observation, idle perception, pleasure,

reverie) within creative and cognitive processes, to twentieth-century phenomenology, as a new understanding of the mechanics of sense perception reframed contemporary reflections on materiality, embodied experience, and organic form.

The project sets the stage for an ambitious reevaluation of the role of emotion in contemporary critical discourse, and lays the theoretical groundwork for ever more urgent discussions of affect, force, and vibrant materiality.



Painting: Picasso's Repose (1908)

**Research Team: Prof. Ruben Borg, Prof. Raz Chen-Morris, Dr. Lola Kantor-Kazovsky, Dr. Noa Shein, Matan Aviel, Daria Feldman Saadia, Stav Lavon, Liora Ortega and Hadar Tamir.**



# Our New Mandel Fellows

## Dr. Hila Dayfani

Hila Dayfani studies biblical and Second Temple Jewish literature. Her work focuses on the textual development of the Pentateuch and interactions between its literary and textual criticism. In her book, *The Transmission of the Pentateuch: Analysis of Variants Due to Graphic Similarity between the Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch* (De Gruyter, 2023), Dayfani explores the transmission process of the Pentateuch by combining traditional tools of textual criticism with paleography of Hebrew and Jewish scripts. The book is based on the dissertation she wrote at Bar Ilan University and completed in 2020 under the supervision of Professor Nili Samet (Bar Ilan University) and Professor Emanuel Tov (the Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

In 2020 Dayfani was a postdoctoral fellow in the *Scripta Qumranica Electronica* project, where she developed and practiced digital tools for material

reconstruction of the Dead Sea scrolls. As part of her postdoctoral research at Oxford University (2021/2022), Dayfani applied these tools to Pentateuchal manuscripts from Qumran, offering new perspectives on the literary and textual criticism of the Pentateuch. Dayfani was then a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Digital Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2022/2023), where she utilized her training in computer sciences (B.Ed.) to explore the Dead Sea scrolls through stylometry and statistical tools.

In the coming years, Dayfani plans to focus on her research project: “Reconceptualizing the Torah in the Second Temple Period.” The project explores what the Torah tradition refers to in Second Temple Judaism and whether there are signs of the emergence of the Pentateuch as a unified literary work that includes the five books of Genesis to Deuteronomy during that period.



The Damascus Pentateuch, The “Ktiv” Project, The National Library of Israel

## Dr. Hanan Mazeh

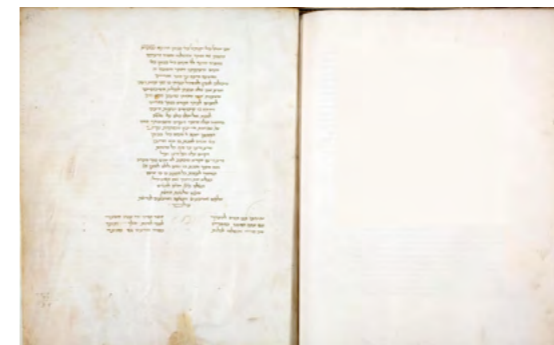
Hanan Mazeh is a scholar of late-antique rabbinic literature. His research explores textual and thematic developments in this corpus as a key to understanding rabbinic society in the first centuries CE within its cultural context. His particular expertise is the Palestinian Talmud (the *Yerushalmi*) and its unique texture, and he is especially interested in questions of territory, and relations between Jews and gentiles in Roman Palestine.

Mazeh completed his PhD in Jewish History at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in 2020. He has been a postdoctoral fellow in a collaborative project run by the *Chronoi-Einstein* Center in Berlin and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2020) as well as at Ben Gurion University (2020-2021), and a research fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania (2021-2022), as a Rothschild and Fulbright awardee, and at the New York University School of Law (2022-2023). His current book project (tentatively titled “A Place that Israel Had Held: Jews, Gentiles, and Landownership in Roman Palestine”) examines the notion of Jewish

“holding” of lands as a criterion for them being considered part of the Land of Israel, and how this notion developed – both textually and conceptually – in rabbinic literature.

Mazeh’s project at the Mandel Scholion Center will explore the paradigm shift in the organization of knowledge and legal discourse within the rabbinic academy in third- and fourth-century Roman Palestine, as reflected in the Palestinian Talmud. It focuses on three aspects: A) The incorporation of new materials as part of the talmudic discourse and a variety of textual transfers, internal adaptations, and cross references that took place in early stages of this text’s formation; B) The dialectical relationship and mutual effect between textual and legal processes when materials are transferred from one context to another; and C) The *Yerushalmi*’s hermeneutic assumptions and assumed readership, in light of parallel developments within the literature of Roman law and early Christianity.

Photos: Manuscript Leiden (Leiden University Library, Or. 4720) of the Talmud Yerushalmi, Volume 1, opening and concluding pages.



## Upcoming Research Group “In Between: Traces of Migration”

2024-2027



Migration, as an act and as a concept, has a central place in the development of human society and in the shaping of its events. According to the UN report for 2022, the number of international migrants has been steadily rising from 173 million in 2000 to 281 million in 2020, constituting, respectively, 2.8 per cent and 3.6 per cent of the global population. In Israel, immigration is a particularly significant phenomenon. Since the establishment of the State of Israel, 3.3 million immigrants have arrived, 44.6% of whom immigrated from 1990 onwards.

The study proposed by this group will illuminate migratory movements, both past and present, approaching the topic from a variety of view points, including geographical-territorial, demographic, sociological, psychological, linguistic, cultural, literary, material, and historical. Special attention will be devoted to the role of memory in immigration/emigration as a factor that constructs its narrative both in real-time and in retrospect.

Following the traces of immigration/emigration may restore its original process, which, at the same

time, is subject to ongoing rewriting. In addition, the research group will seek to examine whether insights emerging from contemporary migration studies shed light on migratory processes in the ancient past, and vice versa.

These issues will be examined from four different perspectives: (a) A philological and theoretical analysis of the linguistic and sociolinguistic changes that have taken place in biblical Hebrew following experiences of both voluntary and forced migration; (b) an archaeological exploration of the material culture of uprooted Idumaeans and the territorially expanding Hasmonaean State and its Jewish population in the late Second Temple period, focusing on the reciprocal influences of both ethnic groups; (c) a reconstruction of literary models brought by immigrant authors to mandatory Palestine, that were initially excluded from the canon of Hebrew literature only to become incorporated into it at a later period, albeit transformed; (d) an examination of psychological and familial effects of the migration process among Former Soviet Union (FSU) emigrants to Israel.

The *In Between: Traces of Migration* group has three primary objectives: (a) To fortify the prominence

of migration studies within Israel's academia and position the Hebrew University at its forefront; (b) to foster a synergy between the humanities and social sciences, thereby offering a sustainable model for the entire field of migration studies; (c) to establish a series of research studies in the humanities that exemplify the investigation of immigration in distant and even ancient historical periods--particularly in areas traditionally explored through the research tools of Jewish studies--and shed light on the reciprocal interactions between the study of contemporary immigration and historical migration phenomena.

Group Members:

- [Prof. Maya Benish-Weisman](#) (Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare),
- [Prof. Noam Mizrahi](#) (Department of Bible),
- [Dr. Orit Peleg-Barkat](#) (Institute of Archaeology)
- [Prof. Giddon Ticotsky](#) (Department of Hebrew Literature).



**IN BETWEEN**  
**TRACES OF MIGRATION**

Group Symbol Design:  
Amitula Strategy and Branding

# News in Brief

## Publications

- **Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten's** book *Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Northern Europe. 1080-1350*, coedited with Tzafrir Barzilay and Eyal Levinson, was published in the Medieval Institute Publications Series of the Western Michigan University
- **Prof. Gal Ventura**, ("The Evolution of Attention"), published her book *Hush Little Baby: The Invention of Infant Sleep in Modern France*. The book was published by McGill-Queen's University Press.
- **Prof. Nathan Wasserman** ("Setting Tables") published his book *Whisper to the Passing Wind. Magic Texts from Ancient Mesopotamia*. The book was published by Carmel Publishing.
- The "**Remapping Ancient Elites**" group has published a special issue on the subject of "Health, Medicine, and Environment in the History of Jewish Thought," edited by Prof. Maren Niehoff as a special volume of *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 27 (2022).

## Mandel Scholion Library Publications

### *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes: Empathy in History, Society, and Culture*

Edited by Galit Noga-Banai, Amos Goldbrg, Ariel Knafo, Lilach Sagiv

We are excited to announce that *Walking in Someone Else's Shoes: Empathy in History, Society, and Culture*, has now been published by Magnes Press. Two years have passed since the research group devoted to



this subject completed their time at the Center, and faced with the current political polarization this topic seems more relevant than ever.

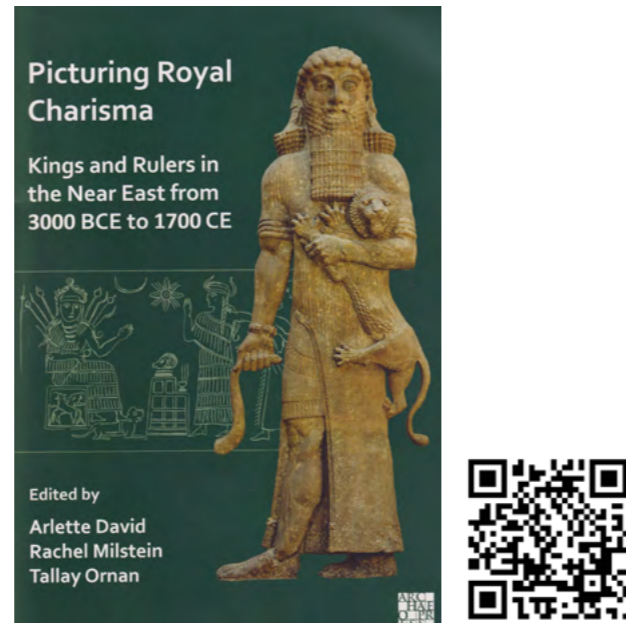
Empathy is often conceptualized as the experience of walking in someone else's shoes. It has been widely recognized as central to cognitive and social development, and a key to nurturing interpersonal relationships and encouraging pro-social action. But empathy has drawbacks as well: Its boundaries, limitations and even potential damage have also been recognized and investigated. The articles in this book take multiple perspectives to studying empathy. They discuss how empathy is developed and how it is bounded, and focus on both its positive and negative implications. Mirroring the group members diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the articles in the first part of the book take a social sciences perspective to empathy, while the second part of the book discusses the role of empathy in the humanities. Together, the

articles offer a portrayal of the vast scope of empathy as a phenomenon, and field of academic study.

***Picturing Royal Charisma Kings and Rulers in the Near East from 3000 BCE to 1700 CE 2023***, Edited by Arlette David, Rachel Milstein and Tallay Ornan of the Humanity Faculty at the Hebrew University.

We are happy to announce the publication of a new book *Picturing Royal Charisma Kings and Rulers in the Near East from 3000 BCE to 1700 CE 2023*, published by ArchoPress, Oxford, supported by Mandel Scholion Research Center, edited by Arlette David, Rachel Milstein and Tallay Ornan of the Humanity Faculty at the Hebrew University.

The volume deals with how Middle Eastern leaders manipulated visuals to advance their rule from around 4500 BC to the 17th century AD. In nine fascinating narratives, it showcases the dynamics of long-lasting Middle Eastern traditions, dealing with the visualization of those who stood at the head of the social order. The contributions discuss: Mesopotamian kings who cast themselves as divine representatives in art; the relationships between the ‘king of men’ and ‘king of beasts’ – the lion; Akhenaten’s visual conception of a divine king without hybrid attributes; the royal image as guiding movements of visitors in the palace of Nimrud; continuities in the functions and representation of Neo-Assyrian eunuchs that survived in the Achaemenid, Sasanian, Byzantine and Islamic courts; the triumphal arch of the emperor Titus and its reflections in Christian Constantinople; patterns of authority and royal legitimacy in 3rd century AD Palmyra and Rome; the use of the Biblical past



in the construction of kingship in 12th century Crusader Jerusalem; and the use of ‘the power of images’ by Islamic rulers, adopting visuals of thrones and throne-rooms despite Islamic opposition to the figurative portrayal of kings.

## Awards

- **Mia Azruel** “Remapping Ancient Elites” research assistant, received the History Department’s award and the Prof. Yaakov Talmon Prize for B.A students.
- **Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten** received the “National Jewish Book Award” in the category of Women’s Studies for her book *Biblical Woman and Jewish Daily Life in the Middle Ages* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).
- **Shir Hoori**, “Remapping Ancient Elites” member, won the Teddy Kollek Award for her M.A. thesis “The chapter describing pilgrimage to Jerusalem in *The Anonymous Itinerarium Burdigalense* (333 CE)”.
- **Tamar Kojman**, “The Evolution of Attention” member, received the Talmon award of excellence from the Department of History.

- **Rachel Rosenbaum Lederman**, “Remapping Ancient Elites” member won the Rachel and Lea Bachna award from the Department of Jewish Thought for achievements in her doctoral studies.
- **Aysheh Maslemani**, “The Evolution of Attention” member was awarded second place at the Poster Conference for Doctoral Students in Psychology for her outstanding poster *Feeling Ambivalence Towards Values*. Aysheh was also granted a Nathan Rotenstreich doctoral fellowship by Israel’s Council of Higher Education (Vattat) (2023-2026).
- **Oz Tamir**, “Remapping Ancient Elites” member, was awarded a Nathan Rotenstreich doctoral fellowship by Israel’s Council of Higher Education (Vattat) (2023-2026).
- **Prof. Gal Ventura**, “The Evolution of Attention” member, won the Rector’s Award for consistent excellence in teaching.

## Promotions and Appointments

- Mandel Fellow **Dr. Céline Debourse** was appointed assistant professor in Assyriology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University.
- **Dr. Avner Ecker**, “Remapping Ancient Elites” member, was granted tenure in Bar Ilan University’s Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology .

- **Dr. Sivan Goren-Arzon**y was appointed as a lecturer in Multidisciplinary Studies in the Humanities with a focus on Asian Studies at Bar Ilan University.
- **Prof. Yael Levin**, “The Evolution of Attention” member, was appointed president of the Joseph Conrad Society of America in January, 2023.
- **Prof. Galit Noga Banai**, “In Someone Else’s Shoes” member (2018-2021), was promoted to the rank of full professor
- **Dr. Tal Orlitsky**, “In Someone Else’s Shoes” member (2018-2021), received a post-doctoral scholarship from Leipzig University in the positive child development field under Prof. Tina Malti.
- **Dr. Yakir Paz**, “Remapping Ancient Elites” member, was granted tenure in HUJI’s Department of Talmud and Halakhah and Classical Studies.
- **Dr. Shai Satran**, “In Someone Else’s Shoes” member, was appointed as senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Tel Aviv University.

- **Prof. Leona Toker**, a member of the Mandel Scholion Academic Committee, was chosen as a member of the “Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities”.

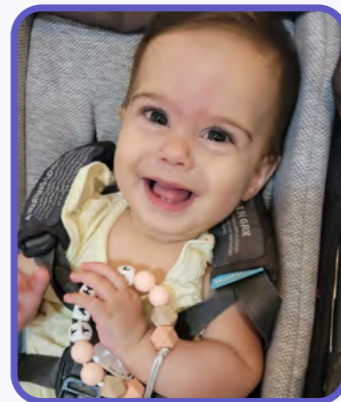
# Congratulations

*This past year has also been a fruitful year at Mandel Scholion in non-academic ways. We are happy to congratulate our members who welcomed new family members!*

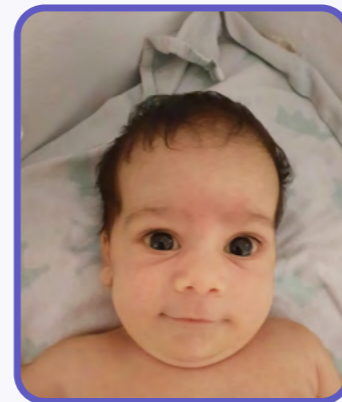
*Mazal tov to **Reut Achdut** and her family who welcomed Noa; to **Oz Tamir** and his family who welcomed Zohar; to **Sivan Goren-Arzony** and her family who welcomed Maayan; and **Rachel Rosenbaum Lederman** and her family who welcomed Gefen Anael and Maayan Halel.*



*Zohar Tamir*



*Noa Achdut*



*Maayan Cohen Arzony*



*Gefen Anael and Maayan Halel Lederman*



*Congratulations to **Prof. Reuven Amitai** on his retirement. Mandel Scholion Center wishes him many more years of excellent and fruitful research alongside time with family and personal growth.*



Photo: Eyal Cohen

In the photo, by the order of their appearance: Hadar Tamir, Einav Kotzer, Nitzan Israeli, Moran Zini Gradshtein

*Many thanks to our administrative staff  
for their hard work and dedication.*

**This newsletter was written and prepared before the Hamas' vicious attack on Israel on October 7th. Any hopes we had for the upcoming year are now colored by the current situation, the murder and kidnapping of so many Israeli civilians and soldiers, and the outbreak of war. It is our hope that Israel as a country, and we as an academic center, will be able to return to our daily routines soon, with a sustainable peace in which the contribution of the humanities to a better future plays an important role. In the meantime, we present this newsletter with hopes for a peaceful resolution and for the preservation of all life.**



Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School  
for Advanced Studies in the Humanities

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM  
الجامعة العبرية في أورشليم القدس



מנדל שוליון  
Mandel Scholion  
مנדل سحوليون